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Series A.

Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: August 13, 1962.

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11-11-11 (S/ST)

Aug 14, 1975

SUBJECT: Berlin

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.

FILE RS/R

USSR

The Secretary
GER - Martin J. Hillenbrand
SOV - W.O. Anderson

Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin
Counselor Georgi M. Kornienko
DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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The Ambassador opened the conversation by stating that he had been instructed to convey to the Secretary the considered views of his government on the Secretary's proposal that there be a Deputy Foreign Ministers Conference to discuss the Berlin problem. Although he frequently referred to a Russian language text, he stipulated that the approach was "oral" in nature. He outlined the following position.

As the Secretary already is aware, the Soviet Government is prepared, as previously, to explore with the other interested governments all possibilities for settling the problems of West Berlin and Germany. However, the Soviet Government cannot agree to the proposal for a Deputy Foreign Ministers Conference since it would give the appearance of negotiations which, in fact, would have no real chance of success. In fact, there has been no progress on resolving the key issue of withdrawing Western forces from West Berlin and terminating the occupation regime there; a Deputy Foreign Ministers Conference is likely to delay settlement. Secretary Rusk himself at Geneva had commented to Foreign Minister Gromyko that he could not envisage what a Deputy Foreign Ministers Conference would discuss. The desirability of ending the international arms race and easing tensions among states, demands "drawing a line under World War II" and liquidating the occupation regime in West Berlin. For its part, the Soviet Government has earnestly sought to resolve the problem of West Berlin. Premier Khrushchev himself has made a number of compromise proposals: e.g., the recent one that certain UN forces be introduced into West Berlin. Unfortunately, the U.S. Government has shown no real interest in settling the West Berlin problem. The Soviet Government feels that "the American position" would put the Soviet

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Government in a position of settling the West Berlin problem in the absence of "our allies" who participated in World War II against Nazi Germany. This faces the USSR with the necessity to sign a peace treaty with the GDR. The Soviet Government feels it cannot remain inactive on the West Berlin problem because those who oppose an improvement in the international climate have been taking advantage of the absence of an agreement, as witness recent developments in West Berlin.

The Secretary stated that, first, he would like to correct an apparent misunderstanding. When discussing the possibility of a Deputy Foreign Ministers Conference in Geneva with Foreign Minister Gromyko, he did not state that he did not know what such a Conference would discuss. On the contrary, he had discussed this subject with specific reference to the statement of General Principles previously given to the Foreign Minister and had pointed out to the Foreign Minister that the General Principles indicated the line along which the U.S. thought Conference discussion might go. However, Soviet views thereon were desired and requested. The Secretary then expressed a hope that the Soviet Government will give further thought to steps which the four Commandants in Berlin might take to alleviate local tension. In this context, the Secretary alluded to recent press reports of incidents along the Berlin wall occasioned by strong emotions accompanying the anniversary of the building of the wall. Ambassador Dobrynin commented that the views of his Government on the situation in West Berlin along the wall were conveyed in his Government's most recent note and he had seen nothing out of brief press reports of subsequent developments.

After referring briefly in a commendatory vein to the progress of the Soviet Union's two men in space, the Secretary reverted to the subject of Berlin and said that he regretted the Soviet Government had not reacted favorably to the proposal for a Deputy Foreign Ministers Conference. The proposal was not intended to be a means to delay agreement but was advanced in a sincere belief that, if acted upon, it would constitute a positive step. He assured the Ambassador that the Soviet Government's views, as conveyed by the Ambassador, would be given careful study.

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NOTE: Subsequent to the conversation reported above, Mr. Anderson obtained from Counselor Kornienko, on a personal and informal basis, a copy of the Russian language text from which Ambassador Dobrynin had read during his interview with the Secretary. An informal translation of the Russian text is attached.

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ORAL STATEMENT MADE BY AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN TO
THE SECRETARY, AUGUST 13, 1962

(Unofficial translation)

The Soviet Government is naturally prepared, as before, to explore all avenues leading to a rapprochement of the positions of the two sides and to a solution of the problem of a peaceful German settlement and the normalization of the situation in West Berlin. It cannot, however, agree to transmit this question to the Deputy Foreign Ministers, i.e., to the creation, in effect, of the appearance of negotiations without any real chance of success.

The German problem is in the center of the attention of the U.S. and Soviet Governments, but the exchange of opinions between them has not yet produced any possibility of overcoming the basic divergencies in the views of the two powers. Nor has any progress been achieved on the main point - the withdrawal of occupation forces from West Berlin and the liquidation of the occupation regime there - in talks between the Soviet and American Ministers of Foreign Affairs. What basis, therefore, exists for anticipating positive results from a conference of Deputy Ministers? It is more logical to assume that such a step would mean only the artificial deferral of a solution to the question of a German peace treaty. There cannot be two opinions about this matter. And even D. Rusk, the U.S. Secretary of State himself, in conversation with Minister of Foreign Affairs Gromyko in Geneva, noted that he could not very well visualize what the Deputy Ministers would discuss, as long as there was no agreement on the decisive point - the withdrawal of occupation troops from West Berlin.

Transferring the question of a peaceful German settlement and the normalization of the situation in West Berlin to the Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs could under present circumstances be interpreted only as evidence of a lack of desire to resolve this urgent international problem. And it really is urgent, for to delay its solution would mean increasing intentionally the dangers contained in the present extremely abnormal atmosphere, which has been produced by the absence of a German peace treaty, and to complicate in the future the solution of these problems of vital importance for many states.

The interests

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The interests of reducing tension, of stopping the arms race, and the task of normalising relations among all states insistently demand closing the books on the Second World War, liquidation of the occupation regime in West Berlin, with the withdrawal of occupation troops therefrom, and assuring the necessary respect for the sovereignty of states. The Soviet Government has exerted no little effort to find a solution on an agreed basis to these problems. The head of the Soviet Government, N.S. Khrushchev, in the exchange of opinions with President J. Kennedy, and the USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs in the course of numerous meetings with the Secretary of State, have made to the American side a number of concrete proposals which moved in the direction of the Western Powers. The Soviet Union has proposed several different ways to achieve agreement on the question of the troops of the three Powers in West Berlin. In particular, the latest Soviet proposal envisages that in the free city of West Berlin there might be deployed for a certain period under the flag of the UN limited contingents of troops of the three Powers, as well as a certain number of troops from other states which are members of the UN.

Judging by all the facts, the U.S. Government is not interested at the present time in finding a mutually acceptable solution to the problems connected with a peaceful German settlement. It is obvious that this circumstance impels the United States to avoid businesslike discussion of the Soviet proposals and to refrain from coming forward with its own suggestions which would take the interests of both sides into account. Apparently it is within this framework that one must also look upon the interest shown by the United States in transferring the German question to the level of the Deputy Ministers. The Soviet Government, genuinely striving to improve the atmosphere in the center of Europe, cannot embark on such a road.

The American position is pushing the Soviet Union toward a settlement of these problems without our former Allies in the war against Hitler Germany. This position in effect confronts the Socialist and other peace-loving states with the necessity of signing a peace treaty with the GDR and thus resolving the question of West Berlin as a free demilitarised city with the liquidation of the remnants of the occupation regime.

In order that there should be complete clarity here, the Soviet Government desires, and considers it necessary, to avail itself of this opportunity to make mention once again of its position on the question of a peaceful German settlement and the normalisation of the situation in West Berlin. It cannot remain inactive in face of the fact that the lack of settlement of post-war problems is being utilised

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by the adversaries of an improvement in the international atmosphere, such as has been taking place for example in recent days in West Berlin to the detriment of the cause of peace and the security of nations.

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